

DRAFT

# Center City Public Realm Guide

# Seattle

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# Public Realm

Center City Seattle is a world class urban center in a stunning natural environment. It is the metropolitan center of Seattle and the greater Puget Sound region.

This guide focuses on the public realm: the spaces between private properties including sidewalks, roadways, parks, alleys, transit zones, and the front edge of private property.

City government, property owners, businesses, and civic organizations are all responsible for a public realm we can be proud of. A first rate public realm is essential to Seattle's regional and national competitiveness, livability, and economic vitality.



*Above left: Shoppers near Westlake Center. Above right: Leisure outside of Pike Place Market. Below: Center City Seattle from Elliot Bay.*





# Center City

Center City is made up of the ten neighborhoods in and around downtown Seattle. Aspirations for the public realm build on past plans ranging from the 1903 Green Ring plan by the Olmsted Brothers, to the 2003 Blue Ring plan, and various plans completed since. This Guide highlights commonalities from past plans and looks towards the future.

Public Spaces Public Life (2009)  
Gehl Architects Study

Pedestrian Master Plan (2009)

Urban Mobility Plan (2007-08)

Bands of Green (2006)  
Seattle Parks Foundation

Seattle Central Waterfront  
Concept Plan(2006)

The Blue Ring plan (2003)

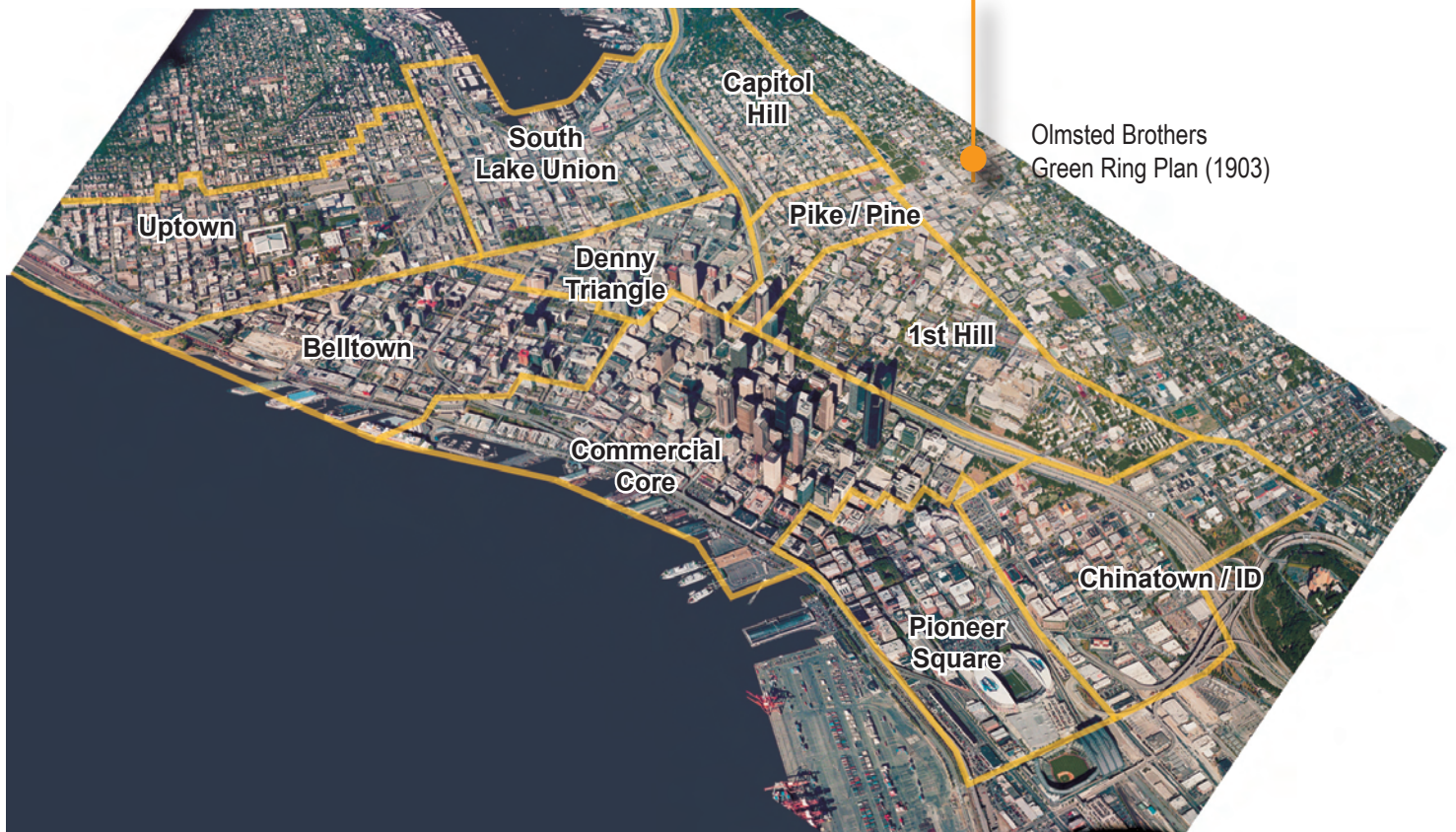
Neighborhood Plans (1995 - 2000)

Seattle Comprehensive Plan (1995)

Downtown Design Forum (1994)

Downtown Plan (1985)

Olmsted Brothers  
Green Ring Plan (1903)





## Great Streets & Places

Center City's great streets and places can aspire to be 'Miracle Miles' of Seattle, forming an armature of extraordinary public realm experiences. Great streets have strong relationships to major civic destinations like Pike Place Market and the Sculpture Park. Seattle's great streets and places are host to vibrant activity, expressive architecture, and a highly appointed public realm.



Left: 5th Ave. at Westlake Center. Right: Pike Place Market and Seattle Central Library.



## Green Streets & Corridors

Green Streets enhance open space and ecological function in Center City. Seattle's has a system of designated Green Streets, and is exploring even higher level 'green corridors' including Bell Street. Green Streets prioritize the pedestrian, and are comfortable for children and seniors. Seattle's Green Streets can provide a linked network of green open spaces.



Left: Green St. in South Lake Union. Right: Vine St. stormwater infrastructure. Community open space at Victor Steinbreck Park.





# Transit Corridors & Hubs

Seattle’s transit system is evolving with light rail, streetcars, Rapid Ride, ferries and other services. Urban design to compliment the transit system is critical. Center City’s transit corridors and hubs can be distinguished public realm places. Key transit corridors include 3rd Ave., and multi-modal hubs at King Street Station, Westlake Center and Coleman Dock.



Left: Boarding the streetcar in South Lake Union. Right: King Street Station. Well designed bus zone on 3rd Ave.

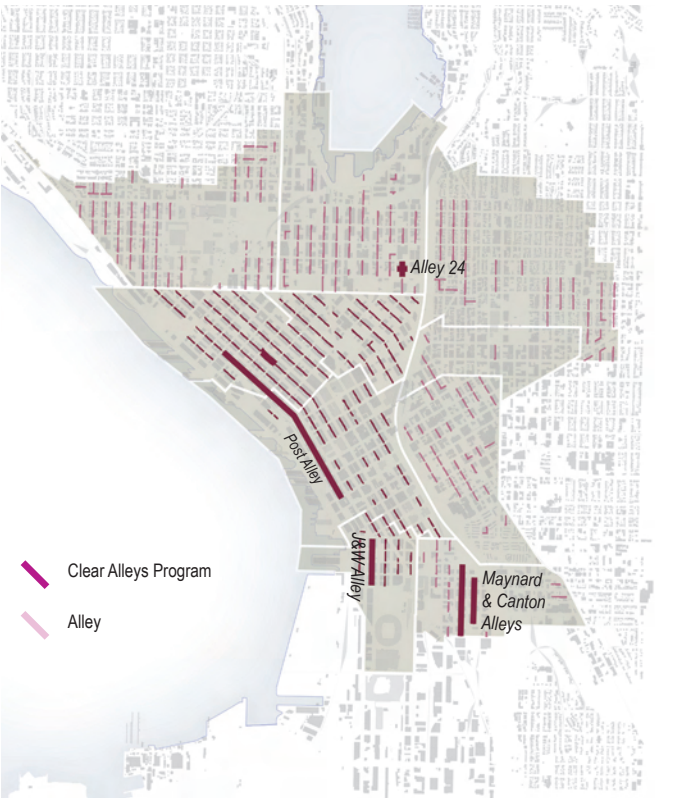


# Alleys

Alleys can offer benefits well beyond their traditional service functions. The intimate scale of alleys in Seattle can make for pleasant, walkable places for use by pedestrians or to supplement ecological function. Several special alleys are already in place, including Post Alley and Canton and Maynard alleys in the Chinatown / International District.



Left: Alley in the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood. Right: Shops and restaurants in Post Alley.

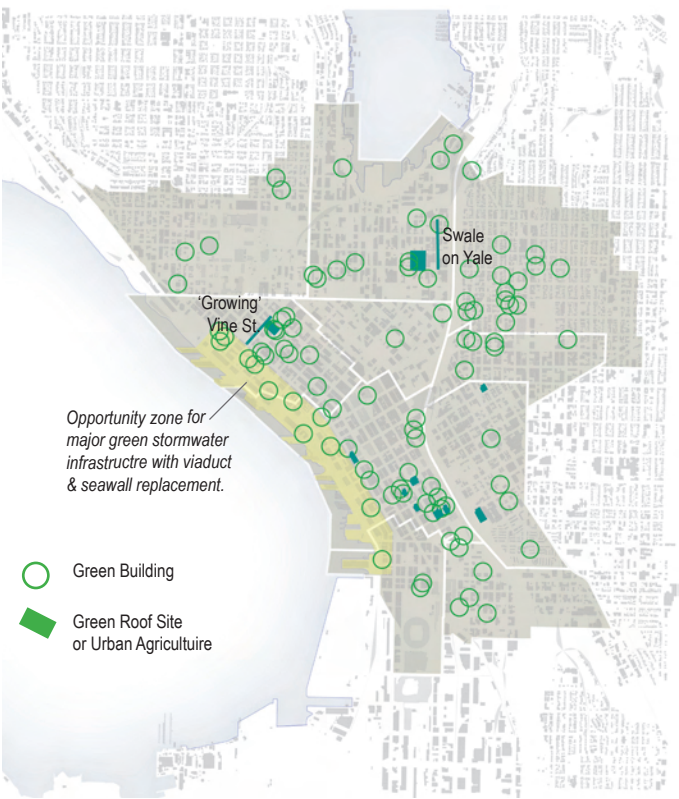


# Sustainable Strategies

Seattle is a national leader in sustainability. Green strategies are found throughout the Center City public realm. From green stormwater infrastructure, to green roofs, to energy efficient buildings, to urban agriculture - sustainable strategies are a public benefit. The map below is a snapshot of the growing number of green buildings, roofs, and infrastructures populating Center City.



The green roof at the 16th floor of the Russell Investments tower.

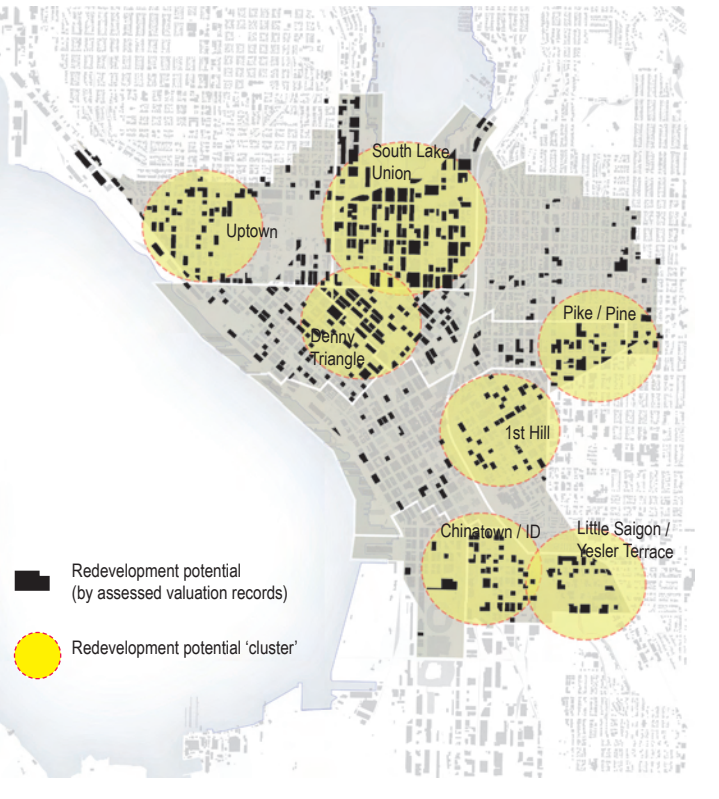


# Development Opportunities

Many public realm improvements are achieved in partnership with private development. Development often contributes to the streetscape, and sometimes provides other public benefits such as open space and affordable housing. Property owners in South Lake Union even pooled funds to create a streetcar line. Substantial infill development will be focused in certain areas of Center City due to available sites and zoning.



Top: Construction cranes in the Denny Triangle neighborhood. Bottom: The South Lake Union Streetcar funded in part by private property owners.





# Central Waterfront

The central waterfront will undergo a once-in-a-century change with Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall replacement. Seattle has an unprecedented opportunity to reconnect Center City with its waterfront. The deep bore tunnel will remove many automobiles from the waterfront, and will provide space for major public realm improvements. Design decisions for the central waterfront can ensure the best public realm connections to other Center City great places; to green streets; and for links with the transit system.



Above: A rendering of the central waterfront potential open space.



Above: Sunset from the Olympic Sculpture Park.



Above: Olympic mountains seen from Victor Steinbreuck Park.



Above: Working waterfront with ferry service and Port facilities.



Left: Street end views to Elliot Bay. Right: Marina.



Above: Myrtle Edwards park and bicycle path.



# A Complete Public Realm

Ongoing and planned public realm improvements for Center City can form a complete public realm strategy. Projects for transportation, open space, private development, and sustainability, can all contribute to a complete public realm.

A list of current and recent actions and programs contributing to the Center City public realm is on the following pages.

*This map displays how a network of Great Streets & Great Places, Green Streets, Transit Priority Corridors & Hubs, and the Central Waterfront can fit together as a public realm strategy. The hilly topography of Center City is an important factor as seen below.*



**Great Streets and Places**  
A series of great places and major civic destinations such as Pike Place Market, historic Pioneer Square, and the Convention Center. Great street connections such as 1st Ave., 5th Ave., Pike and Pine St., Jackson St., Madison St., Broadway and a new Mercer St.

**Transit Corridors and Hubs**  
Distinguished urban design in and around Center City's three primary transit hubs: Westlake Center, King Street Station, and Coleman Dock. Special transit supportive features along transit priority corridors including 3rd Ave. and Stewart Street, and a network of future streetcar lines.

**Green Streets and Corridors**  
A network of green streets enhance open spaces and ecological function and livability linking parks and open spaces. High-level green corridors provide park-like corridors. Green Streets include Bell Street, University Street, Thomas Street and others.

**Central Waterfront**  
Reconnection of Center City with its waterfront with a Viaduct and Seawall replacement. New public realm connections to important central waterfront nodes are made.



# Center City Public Realm Programs & Actions

## Great Streets & Places

> **Parks Programming.** The Department of Parks & Recreation initiative to schedule programs and activities in Center City parks is ongoing in 2009.

> **Signal Box Art.** Art was placed on Center City signal boxes in the right of way in 2009.

> **Street Vending & Sidewalk Cafes.** Legislation was passed in 2009 to expand street vending and sidewalk cafe opportunities.

> **Mercer Corridor Improvements.** Design and funding is in place for a major overhaul of the Mercer corridor.

> **Pike / Pine Streetscape.** A streetscape concept plan was prepared for urban design improvements from 1st - 4th Ave during 2009.

> **1st Hill Streetcar.** A streetcar line is in the design phase during 2010 for Jackson Street to First Hill and Broadway.

> **Central Line Streetcar.** A streetcar line is planned but not yet under design for 1st Avenue through the heart of Center City to Seattle Center.

> **Broadway Station Area Planning & Design.** Design workshops around the Sound Transit light rail station are ongoing in 2009 and continuing into 2010.

> **Madison Street Overpass.** A concept design is completed for Madison Street overpass improvements.

> **South Lake Union Park.** Phased construction of the park is ongoing in 2009. The Museum of History and Industry is planning for future occupation of the armory facility.

> **Civic Campus.** Phased civic campus have been completed over several years including the new City Hall. The Civic Square project just west of City Hall is pending private partner funding.

## Green Streets & Corridors

> **Bell Street Park Boulevard.** The Bell Street Park Boulevard improvement is funded through the Pro Parks Levy, and is in design during 2009 for construction starting in 2010.

> **Chinatown / ID Green Streets.** A streetscape concept plan is underway in 2009 for Maynard Ave. S. and S. Lane St. in Chinatown.

> **Denny Triangle & South Lake Union Green Streets.** A range of Green Street improvements were implemented with recent development including: Taylor Ave., Lenora St., 9th Ave., Terry Ave. N. and green streets in the neighborhoods.

> **Belltown Green Streets.** Green street improvements were completed over a number of years including Vine St. and Cedar St.

> **Thomas St. and 8th Ave. N.** Green Street concept planning and design for these South Lake Union streets is scheduled for 2010 to accompany grid reconnection associated with the deep bore tunnel.

> **Swale on Yale.** A demonstration project for a 4 block green stormwater infiltration facility on Yale Ave in South Lake Union is designed for future implementation.

## Transit Corridors & Hubs

> **Westlake Square.** A portion of Westlake Ave is being closed to create an enhanced Westlake Square plaza. Construction will begin in 2010.

> **Westlake Hub Planning.** A transportation and urban design plan for the westlake hub was completed in 2009.

> **King Street Station.** Station renovation is ongoing in 2009. Area urban design improvements are being studied.

> **3rd Ave. Urban Design and Improvements.** An urban design plan was completed in 2009 for transit supportive urban design elements for 3rd Ave. Bus bulbs in Belltown are scheduled for construction in 2010.

> **Rapid Ride.** The Metro Transit enhanced service is scheduled for launch in 2010, and may include future associated bus stop upgrades in Center City.



## Central Waterfront

> **Alaskan Way Viaduct / Sewall Replacement.** Central waterfront urban design can take place during tunnel construction during the 2010's.

> **Aquarium Renovation / Central Waterfront Park.** The Seattle Aquarium completed a major renovation of the Aquarium in 2009 and has further plans to improve the facility.

> **Pier 62/63.** Seattle Parks Department owns and manages Pier 62/63 as open space. The piers are a major opportunity for future improvement as a waterfront attraction.

## Alleys

> **Clear Alleys Program.** The program was launched in 2009 to remove dumpsters and improve cleanliness and safety of Center City alleys.

> **Alley Activation 'Parties'.** A series of gatherings were held in 2009 in Pioneer Square alleys to celebrate potential active uses of alleys.

> **Chinatown / ID Alleys.** Community based groups in Chinatown with assistance from the City's Office of Economic Development are supporting active use of historic Chinatown alleys.

## Sustainable Strategies

> **Swale on Yale.** Swale on Yale is a sustainable stormwater infiltration facility designed for several blocks on Yale Ave. Seattle Public Utilities hopes to implement the project with development or as a future city project.

> **Green Roofs.** Private and public owners continue to implement green roofs on Center City buildings.

> **Urban Agriculture.** Urban agriculture is established in several parks including Cascade Park and the Kobe Terrace Gardens.

> **Green Buildings.** There are more than 85 private or public buildings in Center City with LEED, BuiltGreen, or SeaGreen certification.

> **Central Waterfront Opportunity.** Seawall and Viaduct replacement doubles as a major opportunity for largescale sustainable infrastructure, which could feature green stormwater treatment and natural shoreline restoration.

## Development Opportunities

> **Yesler Terrace.** Planning is underway for Seattle Housing Authority's redevelopment of the 28 acre subsidized housing site as a new mixed income community.

> **Major Private Projects on Hold.** Major commercial, retail and hotel projects permitted at 2nd / Pike, 5th / Madison, 5th / Columbia and others may move forward as economic conditions improve.

> **South Lake Union & Uptown.** Further infill development can be accommodated in South Lake Union and Uptown, facilitated by major transportation improvements including the Mercer Corridor and SR 99 projects.

> **Clise Properties.** A cluster of privately owned parcels with substantial redevelopment potential in the Denny Triangle are under common ownership.

> **Little Saigon / International District.** Zoning in and around the International District can accommodate major infill development and reuse of older structures.

> **1st Hill & Pike / Pine.** Neighborhoods west of I-5 have capacity for substantial infill development on scattered sites.

